Foreign equity in plantation sector

3. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Labour Ministry has opposed Govrernment's proposal to allow upto 74 per cent foreign equity in the plantation sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) No formal reference has been received from Labour Ministry in this regard.

(b) Does not arise.

Crisis in tea industry

4. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the Crisis in Tea Industry due to the continued decline in tea prices and non-payment of wages to the plantation workers resulting in starvation deaths, particularly in South Indian Tea Gardens;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are being taken to solve the problem?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Government is aware of the crisis faced by tea industry in South India due to declining prices. However, no reports about non-payment of wages to the plantation workers resulting in starvation deaths have been received by the Government/Tea Board.

(c) In order to resolve the problem of low prices at the auction in South India, Government has taken various measures which include implementation of a Price Subsidy Scheme through Tea Board for the small growers of tea (holding tea gardens upto 10.12 ha.) under which a maximum subsidy of